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ABSTRACT

This paper considers issues involved in obtaining and using funds for limited English proficient (LEP) handicapped students, and reviews two major projects designed specifically for this population. Second language training programs have been offered to help assessment personnel develop further language skills and enhanced cultural appreciation. Six-week summer institutes have been attended by psychologists, speech and language specialists, resource specialists, and school nurses. The second project provides training materials for education staff working with LEP exceptional children. Training modules focus on three major areas: legislation in special and bilingual education, implications of bilingualism and biculturalism for special education, and teaching strategies. A brief description of time requirements, target audience and objectives for each module is provided. (CL)

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HOW TO UTILIZE VARIOUS STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCY RESOURCES FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PUPILS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

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Educational resources are often difficult to find. Special funds for needy students, while advertised among certain groups, may not reach other groups who work with the same population. This often causes problems, including a lack of awareness of available resources, the eligibility for various programs, and available resources for parents.

Individuals with developmental disabilities are defined by law to include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. For eligibility, these conditions must be present prior to age eighteen and are expected to continue indefinitely. Many of the regional center clients are bilingual or limited English proficient. California currently services many Spanish speaking people with developmental disabilities.

There are twenty-one regional centers which provide assistance to developmentally disabled individuals. The regional centers provide a range of services including diagnosis, educational planning, vocational education, speech therapy, behavior modification, and coordination of resources with other agencies.

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Another important service which regional centers provide is parent education and advocacy. Family assistance in obtaining services, education on behavior intervention, and recreational planning are but a few available services.

The total needs of the developmentally disabled individual can and should be coordinated through regional centers. Public school personnel and other community agencies who work with these clients should contact regional center representatives for additional information.

Many questions have been raised regarding the use of state and federal bilingual funds for children who are limited English proficient and in need of special education assistance. State funds available for LEP students include Economic Impact Aid (EIA), State Compensatory Education, School Improvement Program (SIP), and staff development money. Guidelines which stipulate the use of these funds currently do not contain exclusionary provisions for dual-eligibility. This means that one student could qualify and generate fiscal resources from more than one program source. Federal guidelines also do not have exclusionary provisions for dual-eligibility, however, most federal money is set aside for specific target populations. Federal funded resources include ESEA Title VII, Chapter I - Migrant, and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act.

Meeting certain programmatic requirements is often a contingency placed upon school districts requesting state and federal financial assistance. Historically, the passage of legislation, acts, and regulations developed from the public's concern that many children come to school proficient in a language other than English, and these children often receive limited benefits from the offered English only curriculum. By and large, school districts who receive state and federal bilingual resources should strive to develop

the students' academic skills via the native language, while also developing the children's oral proficiency in English. In addition, the children's cultural heritage and psychosocial development, including self-concept, should be enhanced by the educational program.

California's state law further requires that the children's primary language be used as a medium of instruction in the basic skill areas, and for teaching English as a second language. The passage of a detailed state law for bilingual instruction (AB 507) marked the state's official recognition that language can be a barrier to equal access and educational opportunities for many children.

The use of state and federal resources for limited English proficient handicapped students is allowable according to state and federal guidelines. However, care must be exercised to ensure that funds designated as supplementary are to be used to supplement, and not supplant, the base program. For example, a complete program for an LEP speech disabled child might include district paid special education services and additional instructional materials supplied by state EIA or federal funds. In planning programs for multi-eligible students, determine first the primary project's responsibility, and then define how supplementary funds can be used to support the proposed basic educational plan.

Over the past few years, the Office of Special Education, State Department of Education, has initiated two major projects designed specifically to improve the services provided to limited English proficient students with exceptional needs. One project is designed for special education personnel in second language acquisition, and the second project provides training materials for educational personnel who work with LEP exceptional children.

Second Language Training Programs

The Office of Special Education recognizes the severe shortage of bilingual assessment personnel. Assessment staff are often untrained when it comes to assessing children suspected of having disabilities in their native language. In response to this need, the Office of Special Education has sponsored six-week summer institutes for training assessment personnel. Briefly, the goals of this program include:

1. To help the assessment personnel who have already developed some second language proficiency to further develop language skills (Cantonese or Spanish).

2. To provide an assessment practicum for the participants which includes instruction and experience in procedures relevant to the evaluation, diagnosis, and the educational planning for the LEP child.

3. To provide the participants with information about the cultural background and its importance in the assessment and planning process for LEP students.

Training sites have included residential and commuter programs within California, and a residential program in Mexico. Eligible participants are psychologists, speech and language specialists, resource specialists, and school nurses.

Staff Training Modules

These training materials were designed to provide information and experiences to personnel working with LEP/students with exceptional needs. The materials have been developed in one to four hour modules and can be used separately or in combinations for one or two day training sessions.

The content was selected and quality was monitored by an advisory committee, meeting periodically from April 1980 thru January 1981. The content has been divided into three major areas: Legislation in Special Education and Bilingual Education, Bilingualism and Biculturalism - Implications for

Special Education (including assessment), and Teaching Strategies.

The modules are intended for delivery to participants through the Special Education Resource Network (SERN) Training Units, and SERN staff teams with bilingual consultants to deliver the training to school site personnel. The trainers presenting these modules are usually specialists from the fields of bilingual education and special education. Staff presenters are trained and experienced to handle questions, and provide suggestions on the content reviewed.

The following is a summary of the modules available:

Module I: "Understanding Special Education and Bilingual Education Legislation, Services, and Programs: Establishing a Dialogue Between Bilingual and Special Educators"

Time: 3 - 3 1/2 hours

Audience: Special educators, bilingual educators.

Objectives: Participants will:

Understand the key points of special and bilingual education legislation, services, and programs.

Work together to promote a working relationship between bilingual and special educators to better serve the needs of the linguistically/culturally different individual who also has special learning needs.

The content of this module is presented in three segments. The first includes introduction, warm-up, and focusing activities. The group is then divided, and special educators receive content on bilingual education legislation and services. The groups are then brought back together for a "working together" activity and debriefing session.

Module II: "The Nature of Bilingualism and Biculturalism: Implications for Special Education"

Time: 3 - 3 1/2 hours

Audience: Special educators, bilingual educators, assessment personnel.

Objectives: Participants will understand:

Distinction between language disorder and language difference.
How to use guidelines to identify difference vs. disorder.
Guidelines in assessing and teaching culturally different students.

Module III: "Instructional Strategies: Teaching Methodology to Match Diagnosed Needs to the Desired Outcomes of the IEP"

Time: 2 - 2 1/2 hours

Audience: Special educators, bilingual educators, assessment personnel

Objectives: Participants will understand:

Universal processes in language acquisition and development.
Assessment of learning processes.
Learning strategies.

Persons interested in the training modules, please contact the Special Education Resource Network (SERN), California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California 95814.